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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

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WILLIAM Q. JUDGE, President.

Each member is invited to send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Members should be careful to write distinctly and on one side of the paper only.

In sending questions, or answers to questions, whenever an assertion is made that such and such is a doctrine, or that "it is said in Theosophical literature," and the like, the name of author, article, volume, and page referred to must be given.

All communications should be addressed to **The Editor, Theosophical Forum, 144 Madison Avenue, New York City.**

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION 55—*(continued)*.

Ages of blind, usurious human laws have brought the world to ruin. Our struggle for physical existence prevents the full study of divine wisdom. Would it not be wise for Theosophists to unitedly advocate improved conditions, say through the Labor Exchange system or some such method? One may ask, Why should we strive for that which would place us on the higher plane of thought or feeling when conditions are so unfavorable?

Dr. C. J. Lopez.—A student of Theosophy should remember at all times that the conditions in which he is placed now are but the outgrowth of his soul's states in the past and that his attitude of mind towards the present is constantly moulding his future. From this standpoint the answer is easy: We should strive for a higher mode of thought and feeling because the very effort, whether apparently successful or not, must yield a beneficial result, if not immediately, at least in the near future. We can think aright, regardless of conditions; and far from being held by "unfavorable conditions," it is the overcoming of these which alone can make us grow mentally and spiritually. If a coarse diamond,

held forcibly against the rough surface of the lapidary's wheel, could express its feelings it is probable that it would complain very bitterly of "unfavorable conditions." Yet that long friction is necessary to bring forth its inherent purity, luster and brilliancy.

We are now reaping as character, innate tendencies and social conditions or opportunities—which are but consequences of previous thoughts, wishes and acts—the good or evil of our own past life, or lives, and at the same time, we are sowing either rank weeds or precious seeds for a future crop. No matter what our circumstances may be, we have always the choice between doing our duty or shirking it. We shall always find others more unfortunate than ourselves, whom we may either help or despise.

And even when we have to struggle not only against outside influences and conditions unfavorable to our highest aims but also against our own weakness of purpose, impermanency of thought and all other shortcomings of our lower nature, yet the road to self-improvement and increased usefulness is always open if we only persist in doing our best in spite of momentary failures, and in endeavoring to put the teachings of Theosophy in daily practice in all our relations with our fellow-beings and even in our "struggle for physical existence."

As to unitedly advocating any special legislation or labor system or particular method for social reform, that would be to commit suicide as a Theosophical Society. Personally I am fully in sympathy with all socialistic and communistic movements, and with all the reformers who labor to improve the present conditions of the civilized world by suppressing some of the exhibitions of "man's inhumanity to man," but I am aware of the fact that the Theosophical Society can no more endorse a political platform than a religious creed. Moreover, I am convinced that a general understanding of Theosophy, especially the doctrines of Karma, Reïncarnation and Universal Brotherhood, can do much towards improving the social conditions now existing; elevating the moral average of the people and checking the all-power sway of selfishness, which is the ultimate cause of all our troubles. Therefore, instead of hitching the Theosophical Society to the train of any party or system, I am in favor of diseminating our teachings broadcast among the followers of all parties and all systems, letting both the oppressor and the oppressed hear the truth, in the hope that if each makes but a little effort in the right direction they will meet each other half way.

Without this high knowledge no community can raise its moral

standard above the danger-line of partizanship and retaliation, no matter how many protective or restrictive laws it may enact. As long as the men who are going to put the laws into practice will be guided by the promptings of their lower natures and ignorant of the light and controlling power of the higher, self-interest will always find some smart way of eluding the man-made laws.

A glance at history shows that at all times a part of humanity has held in cruel bondage and slavery some weaker part, always in the name of some selfish interest, and also that the wronged and downtrodden ones periodically revolt and fight for rights and for freedom, but if successful they hasten to imitate the selfishness and stubbornness of their former oppressors. Why? Because there is no such thing as compelling people to be good by any legislation whatsoever; people must become good through true knowledge, and true knowledge can only be acquired by self-efforts and self-control. After reaching this condition of evolution people need no laws, because every man will be a law unto himself.

And it is not necessary that a great number of persons should join the T.S. or call themselves by any particular name; all that is needed is that the great bulk of the public without distinction of party or condition should correctly understand Theosophy. To that end we should all coöperate, leaving the adjustment to the one, immutable Law.

A. H. Spencer.—"Ages of blind, usurious human laws have brought the world to ruin." This is about the worst case of pessimism that I have run against for many a day. I fear our pessimistic friend is temporarily out of a job, in which event I will admit, speaking from experience, that the world does have a decayed look about it for the time being. The resumption of steady work however, with three moderate meals a day and a cool bath in the morning ought to cause such views to disappear like ice cream before a Philadelphia school-girl. And so the world is ruined. This is news to me; in fact, I am disposed to doubt it. Are there not still a few magnificent mountains, and the sublime ocean, a considerable forest or so, and a few useful and respectable rivers? Does not the proverbially hilarious brooklet still trickle in the glorious sunshine of springtime, or snook cosily away under its banks as it pulls oves itself the icy blanket of winter? Do not the summer clouds caress the earth and weep by turns, like lovely woman in need of a sealskin saque, just as they

always did? And are there not more or less comfortable palaces for the rich, and equally more or less comfortable cabins for the poor, with their respective concomitants of Pullman cars and steerage passages at low rates?

And why should the "struggle for physical existence prevent the full study of Divine Wisdom"? Being on the physical plane and concerned, especially during this moment of our evolution, with the analysis and consideration of physical things, would it not be moral cowardice to run away from them? As a matter of fact the struggle for physical existence to which our aforementioned P. F. refers is the very field upon which we are best fitted to attain that wisdom which may enable us to approach somewhat towards the Divine. Struggles are mere episodes, and each one is not unlike a burr on the inside of our moral undershirt, irritating and annoying, but far from fatal.

Our P. F. suggests that Theosophists should unitedly advocate improved conditions, through the Labor Exchange system (whatever that may be). Being actively and constantly engaged myself in exchanging labor with others, I can appreciate the virtue and beneficence of this, but scarcely perceive the necessity of wearing a special label to emphasize the occupation, though I see no reason for interfering with others, whether they be Theosophists or not, who might prefer to do so.

Our P. F. asks: "Why should we strain after that which would place us on a higher plane of thought or feeling when conditions are so unfavorable?" This beats me. What does our P. F. suppose Theosophy is, anyhow? A kind of spiritual peach jam, so to speak, to be spread upon the bread and butter of our daily habits on festal occasions; a sort of "best-chamber" cover-lid, to be brought out when guests arrive and we are on our particular good-behavior? I do not by any means take that view of it, but on the contrary have found those persons to best fill my conception of Theosophists who keep a little Theosophy in every pocket, from dress-suit to overalls, where it can conveniently be got at on every occasion and in all company.

Take a walk through Central Park, my dear P. F., some morning, and chuck peanuts to the squirrels; there is a heap more Theosophy right there than will be found on the line you are apparently travelling.

Bandusia Wakefield.—All true Theosophists will do what they can to improve the conditions of humanity and to help humanity in the best way possible according to their knowledge. But I

think it would not be wise for all Theosophists or members of the Theosophical Society to unite in advocating some formulated system of externals for improving conditions. It would have the effect of establishing a creed, for it would be practically saying, "Members of the Theosophical Society must accept this method of procedure and act accordingly."

It is not a settled fact that existing conditions are unfavorable to the attainment of a "higher plane of thought or feeling." It is not so much the conditions as the way in which we meet them that determines the effect upon our soul growth. If we rebel against them as unjust and feel hard and uncharitable towards others because of them we are but making for ourselves bitter experiences. But if we feel that we ourselves are responsible for our lot, and try to make the best of it, we shall find these hard conditions means to the desired end. Conditions may be unfavorable for study and yet be very favorable for the cultivation of patience "that naught can ruffle," of power to bear uncomplainingly the inevitable, of sympathy and charity for others, and of the spirit of self-denial and altruism. The cultivation of such qualities as these will prepare the way for the reception of divine wisdom as well as help to ameliorate external conditions. But these qualities grow through practice and experience of their need rather than through study. Study of truth is helpful, especially when accompanied by a desire to help others; but study from a purely selfish motive may be a hindrance to the attainment of divine wisdom. The inner conditions are of more consequence than the outer. The feeling that it is of no use to try is a greater hindrance to accomplishment than outside circumstance. The overcoming of selfishness and the attainment of altruism will "place us on the higher plane of thought or feeling," and we should strive for these things, because by so doing we shall in time attain them; and not ourselves alone, but all humanity will be blessed in the attainment.

Dr. T. Docking.—What else can *blind* men do than bring ruin everywhere around them: they are leaders of the blind and both fall into the ditch! Now I fearlessly assert that our struggle for physical existence does not prevent the full study of Divine Wisdom. I know that it is the general excuse, but "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." (*Matthew*, xix, 24.)

Most positively it would be unwise for Theosophists to even try to encourage institutions formed *solely* for the above-named

purpose: see the Master's answer to his disciple when he asked leave of absence to go and bury his father; he said, "Let the dead bury their dead," etc. (*Matthew*, viii, 22.) Jesus was fully justified when he taught to "let the wheat and tares grow up together until harvest, lest in destroying the one the other should be injured also" (*Matthew*, xiii, 26). Their very wickedness hurries them off the scene, and the warning should benefit the better disposed. Again, *none* can carry his neighbor's Karma. Hence the Scripture, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still," etc. (*Revelation*, xxii, 11.) He places himself beyond the pale of help.

I am very old now, but when very young my ideas were very similar to the above. With each step in life I always hoped for fuller information. After diligent search in very many creeds fruitlessly, at length, since the mountain would not come to me, I went to the mountain. For after deep and careful thought I came to the conclusion that naturally the pig makes its own mire-hole and continues to wallow in it. So with the blind animal, man, the same may be said with variations, with regard to the highest skilled or most scientifically and intellectually trained, unaided by the spirit and heart. For it is proverbial that the latter rogue is the worst. All along the line man really makes his own laws, environments or conditions, and it cannot be otherwise. It requires no augur to tell a man by his surroundings as a whole. The truly enlightened man tills his garden seasonably, improves his ways, selects his associates, wastes no time, for where the treasure is there you will always find his thoughts, and they are *real* things. Thinking, thus for himself and his class, he is guided by higher laws, *i.e.*, the spiritual. *Until* man of himself, so to say, leaves the unclean thing, he is deaf to all higher instruction and always will be. The only thing one can do to better his condition is to harken to the still small voice within, of real wisdom, *i.e.*, his conscience; to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and do all he possibly can to lead a new life, which will place him on a plane of higher thought; thus he himself will make his own conditions favorable.

As for me, especially during the last twenty years, since I have been sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, *i.e.*, studying the Theosophical tenets, the light of truth in full force has enlightened my hitherto benighted condition, notwithstanding all my most careful search in every creed to which I could gain access, but now I full well know "that as a man sows even so shall he reap," and that not blindly. In the fulness of my heart I thank God for this most equitable and holy Law, for without it, and that in its full-

est integrity, applied to myself individually, I could not progress spiritually.

I care not what name you give the troubles, *all* without exception are the same. In our passage through this state of probation if this small lesson fails to be correctly learned the present life has been a failure, then let us learn at least to be thankful that we in mercy are permitted to return to earth, if perchance we can right the wrong. He only will strive whose *real* sight is opened; he is fleeing from darkness; he knows full well that the only true light is from above or rather within, and while this is his condition he does not swerve to the right or to the left, but keeps a straight course towards the light. He can only progress by conquering and leaving behind the unfavorable conditions—in fact, without these very temptations surely he cannot gain the higher or purity of thought or feeling.

QUESTION 56.

Our branch recently discussed the theories advanced by the "Elixir of Life," one of the articles in Five Years of Theosophy. *Some of the members thought the advice to continue to live eternally and the methods suggested for so doing in this article should be followed; but it seems to me that such is pernicious and contrary to the advice of the* Bhagavad Gîtâ *and* Voice of the Silence, *and also to true Brotherhood. Is it not all pure selfishness? Will the* FORUM *please discuss this?*

Frances J. Hall.—In my opinion there is both good and bad in the article in question. There is much good advice in regard to purity and moderation, and as to the means by which one may become better fitted to help humanity. That which I hold to be bad and pernicious in the article is the undertone that runs through it all that ultimately this long course of training is only so that oneself may be benefited. The author, at the beginning of the article, half apologizes for this selfish aspect of the matter. He says, "Well, viewed in a short-sighted way it is so" (*i.e.*, the most concentrated form of selfishness, opposed to Theosophic professions of benevolence and regard for the good of humanity). "But," he continues, "to do good, as in everything else, a man *must have* time and materials to work with, and this is a necessary means to the acquirement of powers by which infinitely more good can be done than without them. When these are once mastered, the opportunities to use them will arrive." This, I think, is shown, however, to be no more than an apology, half-hearted

at best, for near the end of the article, speaking of those who have "attained," and whom the stern sense of duty never leaves, the author says: "It is with the greatest difficulty that even one or two [Adepts] can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs." The possibility of helping others and of performing one's duty to the utmost by the attainment of Adeptship set forth in this article is, in my opinion, more than counterbalanced by the suggested fear of *injuring one's own progress*, and by the question, "Is the result of all that have gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?"—such attempts as those made by the Saviours of the world, I suppose. In this respect I think the teaching of "The Elixir of Life" is very different from that of the *Gîtâ* and the *Voice of the Silence*. One of the greatest bars to true progress is the desire to progress, the looking to results, and the fear of *injuring one's progress*. But there is much good advice given in the article in question, as no doubt everyone will admit; but surely whatever there is of good in it should be followed, not so that oneself may be pure, may be immortal, may attain Nirvana or may be able to help humanity only in the ages to come; but that one may work better *now*, may help humanity *now*, may taste of immortality *now;* for immortality knows no future, only the eternal present and that present is ours *now* if we will but take it. If we refuse to use the present then are we truly dead *now*, fast asleep, knowing nothing of real life. In my opinion the elixir of life that most of us present-day people need is to be found in the performance of duty and in the sense of present opportunity to perform that duty. Perhaps later on it will be necessary to consider other ingredients of this elixir and to add other magical potencies, but we shall never know these until we have at least begun to distil this first essence which can be obtained only by the unselfish performance of duty, and the practice of Brotherhood.

J. H. Fussell.—The general question as to whether selfishness is really inculcated in the article in question is discussed in another article in *Five Years of Theosophy*, page 33, entitled "Is the Desire to 'Live' Selfish?" and I would suggest that the questioner read that. But aside from that there are certain passages in the article which if taken alone appear to support the views of the questioner. The question then arises: Is it fair to take isolated statements and to form one's judgment from them? I do not think so. The whole trend of the article must be considered

and also whether the article is applicable to all cases. The necessity of maintaining health must be quite evident to all in order that duty may be rightly performed, but in the case of the ordinary man it is quite conceivable that there may be times when health and life itself should be sacrificed for the sake of duty. Is it not, however, possible that in the case of those further advanced along the "Path" the performance of every duty is compatable with the continuance of life and that the performance of the *highest* duties demands such a purified body as can be obtained only by the process described in the article in question? It is a question either of living for the sake of living and for enjoyment of pleasure and power *or* of living for the sake of performing higher duties and taking conscious part in the work of Nature. In the latter case there will be knowledge, power, bliss beyond our conception but perhaps also a greater sacrifice than would ever be possible if this "immortality" had not been attained. It is said that at the final initiation when the great choice has to be made, if there is *one* selfish tendency in the heart of the candidate which has not been eradicated and which may exist unknown to himself then inevitably he accepts Nirvana and choses bliss for self, passing forever out of all touch with mankind. But if he be pure utterly, utterly unselfish, selfless, then he may return to still help humanity; he becomes a Nirmanakaya and lives in his perfected inner body on the ethereal planes or of his own choice incarnates as a Mahatma. Hence it seems to me that the building of a perfect form is but a step in the drama of life, necessary indeed, but not as an end—only as a means. Considered alone and as an end, the advice given in the article may mislead some and appear the acme of selfishness, but seen in its true bearing in relation to the whole of life and to the eternal progress of the soul it is entirely reasonable. Everyone, however, consciously or unconsciously, makes application of all these matters to his own case, and maybe some have tried to follow the advice given. My own opinion in regard to this is that the prolonging of life is not the immediate duty that lies before us now, but there is much good advice given concerning purity and unselfishness that all can and should follow. We may have many steps yet to take before we can follow practically all that is there stated, but until we come to that point we have enough to do in performing those duties which lie before us now.

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

FOR THE USE OF BRANCHES.

In articles and addresses never use Sanskrit or foreign terms without also giving the English meaning; use English terms preferably.

LIFE OR PRANA.

Life is universal and eternal. Is not a "mode of matter" but is coëxistent with it. Cohesion a result of Prana-Kama. Molecular attraction and repulsion not possible without this principle. Present on all planes as differentiations of Jiva, and in human body through its direct vehicle, the Linga Sharira, as "invisible lives." Jiva also permeates the other human principles. Too much life produces sleep; sleep restores the equilibrium. Death results from this constant inrush and outrush. In death an increased activity of life.

REFERENCES.

Ocean of Theosophy, pp. 35, 36; *Secret Doctrine*, vol. i, pp. 225, 242, 243, 249, 250, o. e.

INTUITION.

Not to be confused with impulse, which is kamic. Impulse is always towards action. Intuition rarely so. May be tested in that way. It is synthetic and not analytic; will often instantaneously explain a series of events, ideas, actions. The action of Buddhi on this plane. Both reason and intuition necessary; reason to be used as interpreter and verifier.

REFERENCES.

Irish Theosophist, vol. iii, No. 8, "Letters to a Lodge"; *Isis Unveiled*, vol. i, pp. 97, 98.

BROTHERHOOD.

Practically considered. The idea founded on spiritual unity. Fact of common origin to be studied in relation to the seven principles. Treatment of others necessarily reäcts on oneself. The teachings of reincarnation as showing that all experience, good or bad, is shared by all men, and that conduct we abhor in another may have been ours in the past. The *conviction* of brotherhood a barrier to all pride, cruelty, and harsh judgment.

REFERENCES.

Light on the Path; Voice of the Silence; Key to Theosophy, p. 41 et seq.; *Ocean of Theosophy*, pp. 97, 98.

ZOROASTRIANISM.

Wrongly called Fire-Worship, Mazdaism, Parseeism, Magism, and Sun-Worship. Founded by the first Zarathustra or Zoroaster, prehistorically. Thirteen Zoroasters are mentioned in the *Dabistan*, one of their sacred books, "Zoroaster" being a generic name like "Christ." The last of them lived about 2000 B.C., but the date is very uncertain. Their Bible is called the *Zend-Avesta* and is divided up into the *Vendîdâd*, the *Yasna*, the *Gâthas*, etc., the last named being the oldest portion. *Gâthas* written in

Zend, probably a form of the Zensar, from which the Stanzas in the *Secret Doctrine* were translated. In the historical period Zoroastrianism was the religion of Bactria and Persia for many centuries, until the latter country was over-run by the Mohamedans about 642 A.D. Many Parsis then emigrated to India, from that time gradually losing the original meaning of their scriptures. About 90,000 of them in India to-day. *Zend-Avesta* teaches that Unity is at the root of all things; that this Unity manifests as a duality called Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu (modernized as Ormuzd and Ahriman), symbolizing the good and evil, positive and negative, and other opposite principles in nature. These are absorbed into the Unity at the close of the Manvantara. Reincarnation is taught and the Seven Principles of man.

REFERENCES.

Five Years of Theosophy, "Zoroastrianism on the Septenary Constitution of Man p. 82, n. e.; *Lucifer*, "The Devil's Own," vol. viii, p. 1; *Glossary*, arts. "Zarathustra "Zend-Avesta."

THEOSOPHICAL NEWS AND WORK.

MILWAUKEE T.S. reports that a Lotus Circle is soon to be established in connection with that branch.

P.C.T.S. have voted to hold their Fourth Ad Interim Convention in San Francisco, September 5th, 1896.

DR. W. W. GAMBLE, of Santa Cruz, has removed to San Francisco, and is aiding in branch work in the latter place.

WESTERLY T.S. holds two meetings each week, Tuesday and Thursday evenings, for reading and discussing papers.

SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN T.S. (Sacramento, Calif.) though small, holds regular meetings and reports good prospects of future growth.

WALLINGFORD T.S. Application has come for the formation of a branch at Wallingford, Conn. This is largely the result of missionary work done by Miss M. L. Guild.

THE state prison located at Folsom, Calif., is regularly visited and lectures given to prisoners by members of the Sacramento Branch. Brothers Cook and Spinks were the last speakers there.

JULIUS OTTL has been elected to fill the unexpired term of treasurer P.C.T.S., caused by the resignation of Ed. B. Rambo, who has faithfully discharged the duties of that office since the organization of the Committee in 1890.

PROMETHEUS T.S. (Portland, Ore.) reports continued interest and work. It holds Sunday evening and branch meetings and *Secret Doctrine* Class weekly with a lively interspersion of lectures from Rev. W. E. Copeland, Dr. Allen Griffiths, and Mrs. Sarah A. Harris.

ARJUNA T.S. (St. Louis, Mo.) has been very successful this year; the interest has been sustained, and the meetings have been well attended by the public. An effort is being made to establish a permanent headquarters and to maintain a library and reading room. There are bright prospects for a successful year.

HOT SPRINGS T.S. continues active. The work of this branch consists largely of propaganda amongst visitors, by which means Theosophy is sent to every point of the compass. The branch holds regular meetings Friday evenings, at 8 o'clock, in the president's library room, corner of Reserve and College streets. Inquiring visitors are always welcomed.

PITTSBURG T.S. has held regular meetings throughout the year Sunday evenings. The resignation of several members took place, some leaving the city, others to form another branch at Wilkinsburg. Prospects are favorable for the starting of another branch at California, Pa., where missionary work has been done from time to time. The library has 51 books and is circulating very well.

AMRITA T.S. (Lincoln, Neb.) presents an interesting report of its work during the past year. Its regular meetings have been kept up without a single failure, a syllabus having been adopted and followed as nearly as possible. There has been no loss of membership in one way or another, by death, suspension, or resignation, and the outlook for Theosophy in Lincoln is more promising than ever before.

LYNN T.S. has held regular weekly meetings since it was organized, and a good attendance and much interest have been kept up. Nineteen public lectures have been delivered to very good sized audiences, six of which have been by the branch members. Study meetings have been held at 176 Washington street, where also a small library is kept. The branch was organized with seven members and has gained nine in the past year; present number, sixteen.

COLUMBUS T.S. has now secured a room exclusively for its own use instead of, as formerly, getting the use of a hall for but one evening in the week. Public meetings are held on Sunday and Tuesday evenings of each week, the Sunday evening meetings being devoted entirely to the consideration of the subjects of Brotherhood, Karma and Reincarnation, while on Tuesday evenings the list of topics is more varied. On Friday evening a study class for members meets.

SYRACUSE T.S. Increased interest has been manifested in the *Secret Doctrine* class, since we are able to study it topically by means of the index. Our circulating library finds constant readers. The reference library, though not large, is eagerly patronized by members interested in Theosophical studies, the six magazines lying on our reading table being also eagerly read. As a branch we are harmonious in action, united in effort, and earnest in work. *(Communicated.)*

BUFFALO T.S. a month ago started a series of talks on "Theosophy and Brotherhood" at Council Hall (largely used by the labor unions) on Sunday evenings, and they promise to be a success. The attendance has been from seven (the magical number) one very stormy evening to thirty-five, and it has been the means of bringing some new men to the regular T.S. meetings on Sunday afternoons and Tuesday evenings. The Buffalo T.S. is developing some earnest workers. *(Communicated.)*

MISS BANDUSIA WAKEFIELD, Secretary of the Dana T.S., Sioux City, Iowa, by invitation read a paper before the Scientific Association of Sioux City on "Law of Periodic Manifestation." This paper met with such favor that she

was invited to read another at an early date. Her second paper was on "The Nature, Evolution and Destiny of Man." There was a fair audience at the first lecture, and this was doubled at the second, all seats taken and people standing, and the closest attention being given throughout.

ALBERT E. S. SMYTHE, of Toronto, spent a few days in Buffalo and lectured on the evening of the 22d of February before the members of the Buffalo T.S. on "Theosophy and the New Testament;" on Sunday afternoon, the 23d, publicly on "Theosophy the Common-sense of Life;" on the same evening on "Theosophy and Brotherhood," and on the evening of Monday, the 24th, on "The Heart of Theosophy;" on Tuesday evening on "Theosophy and the Book of Revelation." The public meetings were well attended.

MEMPHIS T.S. has lately had a visit from Mr. H. T. Patterson, who on his return to New York reported the exceeding solidity of the members there. This Society recently rented a small hall in Second street and holds its public meetings on Thursday evenings. The members are all hard workers and are preparing an active propaganda in Memphis. The Society invites all Theosophists stopping or passing through Memphis to visit it. The president is Mr. Galloway, Peabody Hotel; the secretary Clarence C. Stowe, 282 Front street.

SOMERVILLE (Mass.) T.S. Since this branch was chartered in March, 1894, it has done good work. It held Sunday afternoon meetings all last winter in a public hall with good audiences, but has latterly changed the time to the evening—a change which, though it doubled the expenses, has nevertheless been well justified by the results, the average attendance at all meetings having been materially increased and contributions given are sufficient to meet expenses. Members from Boston and Cambridge have furnished many of the lecturers.

SAN DIEGO T.S. has a hall in the central part of the city, where a lending library of 204 volumes is kept, and which is well patronized. The hall is kept open every afternoon, when the books and magazines are accessible to the public. The current magazines are also kept on file. Every Sunday evening a lecture is given by one of the branch members, after which questions are asked. Wednesday evening of each week a meeting is held for study, and on Thursday evenings a class meets for the study of the *Secret Doctrine*. All meetings are open to the public and well attended.

SEATTLE T.S. has held 57 public meetings during the past year with an average attedance of 55 persons, and 52 study meetings with an average attendance of 11 members. Mrs. A. B. Blodget has conducted a Beginners' class in Theosophy, which is very well attended. In last October three members were appointed as a Committee to decorate and improve the Assembly Hall of the Society. $16.90 was raised by contributions and spent to excellent advantage; and with the work and time of all members, which was freely given, great improvements were effected in the appearance of the hall. The branch is established on a very firm basis for its future work.

UNITY T.S. (St. Paul, Minn.) has rented a room in the Endicott Building and has public meetings there each week, Sunday evenings being devoted to an address for the benefit of the public, and Wednesday evenings to the discussion of special subjects. The attendance is very good, especially Sunday evenings, and good reports are received through the press. A library fund is

being made up by a method somewhat similar to that employed by the Loyalty Branch some time since, each member being asked to earn a dollar in some way for the Society. One member in this way has earned $8.00 by making and selling candy. Formation of a Lotus Circle is in contemplation.

Los Angeles T.S. reports that during the past year much has been accomplished by the branch and its executive committee; interest has been steadily growing, new members added, old members have become more active and earnest, and great interest has been manifested in both branch and public meetings. The branch now numbers twenty-nine members, ten of whom have been added during the past year. Fifty-two branch meetings have been held at headquarters, sixty public lectures have been given in Los Angeles, and one White Lotus Day meeting was held. About fifteen lectures were given in the suburban towns of Compton, Pasadena and East Los Angeles by various members. Within the past four months a beginners' class has been instituted on Tuesday evenings, and a training class on Friday evenings. These have an average attendance of 10. About 37 press reports, giving very full accounts of lectures, have been printed; also three long and independent articles. The average attendance at the public lectures for the first half of the year was about 75; for the latter half, about 175. The library contains 116 volumes and has a circulation of 426 volumes.

REPORT OF CENTRAL STATES COMMITTEE.

The C. S. C. lecturer has been working in northern Ohio for the past month, and has visited some ten or twelve different places, returning every Sunday to Toledo, where he has lectured to large and interested audiences.

Thre centres have been organized in Ohio, and one in Wisconsin.

Manasa Branch members have been active and effective in assisting Mr. Harding's work in and about Toledo. They have taken up several lines of propaganda that promise good results.

We have a excellent report of the steady and progressive work in the Dayton Branch meetings, and evenings devoted to private study; also the Sunday lectures have a very good attendance.

Indianapolis Branch is active; it has sent us several good papers recently to be added to our Exchange Bureau.

Fort Wayne members have been visiting and speaking at some of the study classes formed during last summer's campaign in their State. This is an important work and should be the special care of branches nearest the towns where our lecturer has organized centres or formed classes for the preliminary study of Theosophy.

Wachtmeister Branch is doing splendid work. The meetings are conducted in Swedish and are held Sunday mornings. They combine study with a lecture. Discussion is permitted and visitors invited to participate; the attendance is good. The regular study class meets Saturdays. Several pamphlets have been printed by this branch in the Scandinavian languages, and distributed. The members have also translated *Theosophy Simply Put* into the Swedish language. Several very energetic and earnest members are constantly laboring for the spread of Theosophy among the classes speaking these languages.

Every member of the Englewood Branch has been assigned to some particular part of the work, and each is patiently pushing it. This united, "shoulder-to-shoulder" effort will surely reap an adequate reward.

From the Clinton Branch we have encouraging letters of its present condition and proposed lines of work for the near future.

Hartington has had a season of inactivity resultant from the combination of unfortunaate circumstances, but is again in harness.

Rapid City reports new members to its branch nearly every month, but as it has a somewhat shifting population to draw from the average remains about she same; still this condition means greater strength and an ever-widening influence.

The following is a list of branches belonging to the C. S.C.: Cincinnati, Columbus, Clinton, Dayton, Detroit, Fort Wayne, Englewood, Hartington, Indianapolis, Loyalty, Lincoln, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Rapid City, Sioux City, Unity, Manasa, and Wachtmeister. *(Communicaied.)*

LOTUS CIRCLE WORK.

The undersigned committee has been appointed with the approval of the President, William Q. Judge, for the purpose of opening communication with all the branches in regard to the work of Lotus Circles of the T.S. in A. It is hoped that in this way the best ideas of those who are most interested in this work may be brought together and a systematic plan adopted which will be of mutual benefit to all concerned. The committee ask the secretary of the branch to kindly aid them in the work by seeing that the following requests are complied with:

1. If the branch has already a Lotus Circle formed, to ask the most active member connected with it to make note of the most successful plans and ideas which have developed in the course of the work, and kindly send them to the Lotus Circle Committee.

2. To get the expression of the branch, if it has no Lotus Circle, as to the need of one or not.

3. To get the expression of the branch or Lotus Circle, if already formed, as to whether it would agree to coöperate with the Lotus Circle Committee in adopting a regular system to be used in all the schools of the T.S. in A.

The formation of this committee is the outcome of various inquiries received at the Headquarters asking for information upon this subject. If sufficient encouragement is received, a regular system of school propaganda can be established—new music and lesson papers printed, and the work of the Lotus Circles be made to form a strong part of the Theosophical movement.

Correspondence is solicited from all who are interested in this work. All communications upon this subject should be addressed to the Lotus Circle Committee, 144 Madison Avenue, New York City.

MRS. ELIZABETH C. MAYER,
MISS BANDUSIA WAKEFIELD,
MR. JAMES M. PRYSE,
} *Committee.*

The above circular was on Feb. 14th last sent to the secretary of every branch of the T.S. in A. A large number of the branches have already responded, the majority of the replies showing a hearty sympathy with the work, and a willingness to coöperate. The Lotus Circle Committee therefore feel that the need is imperative, and are planning the first set of lesson papers, which they hope to make very attractive and interesting The committee desire to strengthen and assist all schools in their work by issuing these lesson papers, but at the same time they will in no way attempt to alter or interfere with local ideas of conducting schools.

Some of the plans that have operated successfully in Lotus Circles will be printed in the FORUM from time to time for the benefit of all the schools.

Any members having topics for lesson papers, poetry or music they would like to have used will render great assistance by sending them to the Lotus Circle Committee.

CONVENTION OF 1896.

The members of the Executive Committee have decided to accept the invitation of the branches in and near Chicago to hold the Second Annual Convention of the T.S.A. in that city and it will be held there on the 26th of April, the fourth Sunday in that month, remaining in session until the evening of Monday, the 27th, unless further prolonged.

The Convention will assemble at 10 o'clock on the morning of April 26th at the Palmer House Assembly Room, Chicago, were also the sessions of Monday will be held. Other intermediate or additional sessions may be arranged for on the spot and announced at the Convention.

All members are entitled to attend the Convention.

Branches in arrears for dues will have no power to vote or have representation. The same rule applies to the case of branches in which the number of members has fallen below five.

Each branch is entitled to send a delegate to represent it. In connection with this matter it is desirable to call attention to Section 3, Article IV, of the Constitution of the T.S.A.—"The basis for representation and voting (by branches) in said Convention shall be one delegate for the first five members and one for every ten after the first five." Any branch not able to send a delegate is entitled to send a proxy or to specially appoint a member of the Convention to represent it, and every branch is earnestly desired to so appoint if unable to provide direct representation. All branches following this course, *i.e.*, appointing some member of the Convention as proxy, but not at present able to designate the individual, will please clearly indicate their wishes to the undersigned or to the Vice-President, Dr. J. D. Buck, 124 W. 7th street, Cincinnati, Ohio, so that the proxy may be given to some member attending the Convention and actually prepared to represent such branches in person. Printed proxies can be had at any stationery store, and should be duly filled up and signed by the president or secretary of the branch. Where the proxy is to be appointed, the space for the appointee should be left blank.

Branches intending to send a delegate to represent them will please forward this information to the President's Office at as early a date as is practicable, so that the list may be made out and ready for the meeting of Convention.

As already requested, the secretaries of branches will kindly send their yearly reports to the President's office as soon as convenient. Such reports are not to be read at the Convention, but an abstract may be printed in the Report of the Convention, and this abstract has to be prepared in advance in order not to delay the printing.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE, *President.*